

No. 5.

On the Intercession of Christ—For Ascension or otherwise.

On the Interpretation of Chaff—2 or 3 specimens or leaves.

Hebrews 7th and 25th.

—*He ever liveth to make Intercession.*—

In the Oeconomy of man's redemption, we observe a regular, miraculous, and awful process.—Jesus Christ is conceived by the Holy-Ghost, and born of a Virgin.—He lives in obscurity and want.—He suffers Death upon the Cross, & rises again the third Day. After his resurrection, He appears first to Mary Magdalene, and then three times to his Disciples, to whom He gave the demonstration of every sense that "He was risen indeed." He expounded to them "the things that were written in the law of Moses, & in the Prophets, & in the Psalms concerning Himself—& whilst he was blessing them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven—where He ever liveth to make Intercession"—to present our Petitions to his Father, and to intercede, in his own name, for our everlasting Salvation. That we might have access to God, it was requisite there should be some Holy-One to mediate between God and man—first by offering himself a sacrifice for the

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sins of the world—in order to appease the wrath of God, and then to plead the merit of his sacrifice on our behalf, & this our Redeemer has undertaken for us. He, “who
“knew no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth,”
was graciously pleased to suffer Death in our stead—& having thereby satisfied God’s justice, and performed his part of the New=Covenant, He is become our Advocate with the Father—or, as St. Paul styles Him, “the
“Mediator of the New=Covenant.” “He is entered,” says the Apostle, “into Heaven itself, there to appear in
“the presence of God for us”—to plead with his Father that He would grant us those good things, which He has promised, on his part, in this second Covenant.

“And such a High=Priest indeed became us, was
“suitable to the state of such sinners, touched with the
“feelings of our Infirmities, and tempted, like as we are,
“yet without sin.” In the midst of wrath God remembered mercy in providing such a Saviour for us. Did the Almighty send his Son into the world for our Redemption—and did the Son of his love willingly undertake the Redemption of lost mankind? Shall we not say

then with the Apostle, "He that spared not his own Son, but gave Him up for us all, shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"—Shall not this affectionate & indulgent Father receive the intercessions of his beloved Son? And shall not this obedient Son make most earnest Intercessions for those He died to redeem? He, who shed his blood to procure the pardon of our sins, will, like a powerful and prevailing Advocate, plead our cause, and alledge his all-sufficient merits and sufferings as full payment of our debt.

At the deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt, "the blood of the Lamb on the Lintel, and on the two Side-Posts was the sign," we read, "for the destroying Angel to pass over the houses of the Israelites."—And again, under the Law—"the High-Priest made an atonement for the people by sprinkling the blood of the Goat upon & before the Mercy-Seat."—Now, if the blood of the Lamb and of the Goat, which were only types & shadows of our Redemption, & had no virtue but what they borrowed from his Sacrifice—could avert the Judgment of God—how much more will the meritorious Blood

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of Christ interpose between God & his People—pacify his wrath and engage his Goodness?

The blessings of Redemption, we are to consider, however, are bestowed, not with indiscriminate liberality, but on stipulated conditions—which, if we neglect to observe, we shall derive no benefit or advantage from the Christian Covenant. Christ indeed suffered Death, which God was pleased to accept of in our stead, and thereupon to grant Him a general Pardon for all mankind. But would a Traitor, who had received, through the Application of Interest and the Exertion of Power, a plenary Pardon—after relapsing into his former Habits—would he be considered, a second time, an object of Mercy? Would the same Power be exerted, and the same Interest be applied, in behalf of a man who continued to act in violation of the Laws of Honor—of the Principles of Gratitude, and the Obligations of Duty? We are the subjects “ of the King of all the earth,” and live in open rebellion against his Government, & against his Laws—and were it not through the prevalence of our great Mediator’s Intercession, the stroke of Justice would

often terminate our Rebellion and our Life together.—
 For “He has no pleasure in the death of a sinner,
 “neither shall any evil dwell with Him.”—Christ al-
 so is the professed Enemy of sin & satan—“there is no
 “more concord,” says St. Paul, “between Christ and
 “Belial, than there is between Light and Darknefs.”—
 And, St. John tells us, that “the purpose for which the
 “Son of God became incarnate, was, that He might
 “destroy the works of the Devil.”—In the benevolent
 Covenant Jesus Christ has instituted, the mercy of the Fa-
 ther, thro’ the supplication of his Son, is obtained on the
 express condition of forsaking our sins: accordingly St.
 Peter, in his sermon to the Jews, speaking of the blessings
 derived from the Revelation of the Gospel, acquaints them
 with the nature and effect of them—“in turning away
 “every one of you from his Iniquities.”—Wherefore see-
 ing the mercy of God will be finally withheld, and the
 Intercession of Christ be ineffectual to our Salvation, un-
 less we embrace the Gospel—it behoves every one, who is
 afraid lest he should “receive the grace of God in vain,”
 to renounce from his heart all impious & licentious prac-

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tices—and to discharge, with conscientious fidelity, every duty, whether relating to God, his Neighbor, or himself.

In the remaining part of this discourse I shall shew the extreme danger of living in the commission of sin, and earnestly exhort you to cease from it.

Whilst we continue in a state of sin, we cut off all Intercourse between God and us. The Almighty thus expresses himself by the mouth of the Prophet—"Your
" iniquities have separated between you and your God—
" & your sins have hid his face from you that He will
" not hear—your feet run to evil—your thoughts are
" thoughts of iniquity—destruction is in your paths—
" the way of peace you know not, and there is no Judge
" ment in your goings—whosoever goeth therein shall
" not know peace." That there is no satisfaction of mind or peace of conscience in the prosecution of vicious courses, is a truth the sinner can neither evade by argument nor controvert by experience. For how shall he, who treadeth in the steps of wickedness, "know peace"—when he is perpetually subject to the Instigations of Conscience & the

Vengeance of Heaven? He may indeed sometimes lull his soul to sleep with the deceitful cry of "Peace—Peace"—but no sooner is the slumber over—no sooner does he awake to the visitations of remorse and the persecutions of iniquity—than a something within him—whose voice—neither the pleasures of sense, the accumulation of riches, nor the gratification of ambition can silence—proclaims, "what hast thou to do with peace, whilst thine iniquities separate between thee & thy God?" When God Almighty delivered the Law to the children of Israel, He would not suffer them to "go up into the mount, or touch the border of it." And so sensible were they of their unworthiness by reason of their sin, that, they were fully persuaded the man, who heard God speak to him, would surely die. By this reflected light we have a very awful view of our condition. We are all sinners—and very many of us, I fear, have reason to "tremble exceedingly," when we examine the accounts which are soon to be submitted to the Inspection of our Almighty Judge. But, however heinous may be our provocations, however deplorable may be our situation—if we will repent and turn to God, "Jesus Christ,

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"the great Mediator between God and Man"—will intercede for us. "He ever liveth to make Intercession" for those whom "He redeemed to God by his Blood." On earth He was our sacrifice—in Heaven He becomes our Advocate.—He presents his merits as an expiation of our sins, and solicits our Pardon through his Atonement.

It becomes us then, both as we regard our own Interest, and as we dread provoking our all-powerful Intercessor—to consider the malignity of sin—that it will one day bring upon us, if continued in—the utter destruction of both body and soul. Does the Sinner believe this awakening truth? Does he believe that sin will one day overwhelm him in destruction, and does he continue to commit it? If you persist in rejecting his purchased Salvation, what—for God's sake ask yourselves very seriously, what do you expect to become of you? Can sin be accounted innocent in the estimation of Him, who to his divine, joined our human, nature, for the very purpose of redeeming us from the guilt of it? And "shall man—that is "a worm"—dare to defeat the purpose of his Maker?

To transgress the Laws God has prescribed for the regula-
 tion of our conduct, is, to set the Almighty at defiance—
 it is to condemn the Atonement of our Redeemer, and
 spurn at the overtures made to us by the Blessed Sanctifier
 of our Souls.—Let the sinner reflect that the Interces-
 sions of his Redeemer, which at the right-hand of God He
 is now making for us—that the Suggestions of the Holy-
 Spirit, which are perpetually infused into our souls—will
 all, one day, become his Accusers.—And it will not be
 very easy to elude the force of their persuasive Testimony.
 Will it be sufficient to say to the Almighty, you preferred a
 life free from the Restraints of Virtue, and the Fetters of
 Piety, to a life of undisturbed peace on earth, & an As-
 surance of future Blessedness for ever—when your Con-
 science now resists, with abhorrence, the deceitful Opiate?
 With what Astonishment will the Sinner behold the For-
 bearing and Long-suffering of an offended God? With
 what Indignation will he look upon the Wounds of his
 crucified Saviour—wounds, inflicted and endured for his
 Salvation? With what Agony of mind will He con-
 template the Intercessions of Jesus Christ, to turn away

his Father's wrath? With what distraction of soul will he observe the many, very many times, in which our gracious Redeemer has interposed between his crying sins & an avenging Deity—in which He has warded off the blow, directed by Justice, at the head of daring and presumptuous Guilt? Would to God I could prevail on the sinner to "be reconciled to God to day, whilst it is called to day!" Instead of complying with the solicitation of every lust, and being born away by the Impulse of every Passion—would to God I could prevail on him to reflect on the stupendous method of his Redemption, and on the unremitting concern of his Redeemer in making Intercessions for him! Would to God I could prevail on him to retire a little while from the pursuits and pleasures of life, and to enter into his own Conscience, and examine carefully what just grounds of hope he can entertain whilst he lives at variance with his Conscience and his God! But he cannot, alas! bestow any time on so trifling a concern as Salvation.—If Jesus Christ intercedes for all men, he doubts not but he shall be comprehended in the effects of his Intercession, and then all will be well.—

Deceitful Expectation! When he comes to lie on the bed of sickness, and "is even hard at death's door"—when the road he is to travel is within his view, he will be anxious to know whether he is prepared to undertake his Journey—and whether the Reception to which he is intitled, is, the Reward of Obedience, or the Chastisement of Neglect. The Doctrine of Intercession, instead of affording Arguments for Presumption—should suggest Motives to Repentance.—The poor and wretched, tho' deprived of all human Comforts—tho' they may be "without food to eat, " and raiment to put on," are, nevertheless, the objects of their Saviour's Love and Affection.—With the most importunate Intercessions He is always entreating his heavenly Father for their eternal Salvation.—The Rich & Prosperous too, are equally the objects of his divine Interposition. For "riches profit not in the day of wrath"—they procure us comforts whilst we are on this side the Grave, but, on the other, they will neither entitle us to favor, nor recommend us to mercy.—

The Hopes of every human being, then, rest, entirely, on the powerful mediation of Jesus Christ our Ad-

vocate and Intercessor. God grant He may not intercede for any one of us, whether rich or poor, in vain! May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be graciously pleased to receive his Petitions and to grant his requests! And thou that sittest at the right-Hand of God have mercy upon us! Forgive our sins—pardon our Iniquities—present us to thy Father clothed in thy Righteousness only, and receive us into Heaven, that where Thou art, we may be also!

Theoph^{us} J. St. John.

Entered at Stationers Hall.

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